JS 44 (Rev. 10/20)

### Case 2:21-cv-03460 (VIVAL COOVIER! SHFILE 08/03/21 Page 1 of 19

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of initiating the civil d	ocket sneet. (SEE INSTRU	CTIONS ON NEXT PAGE O	F THIS F	ORM.)							
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDA	NTS						
Ricole Morgan, individually and as legal guardian of T.M., a minor				Valley Forge Military Academy & College							
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant							
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)				Attorneys (If Known)							
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III DEQUESTED IN											
VII. REQUESTED IN CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION DEMANDS CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:						nt:					
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## Case 2:21-cv-03460-NNOAD STATESTIESTERIC FOOTING 8/03/21 Page 2 of 19 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

	the the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)						
	Conshohocken, Pennsylvania						
Address of Defendant:	Wayne, Pennsylvania						
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Wayne, Pennsylvania							
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:							
Case Number: None Judge	e: Date Terminated:						
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any							
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year yes No							
<ol> <li>Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?</li> </ol>							
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?							
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social case filed by the same individual?	this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights  Yes  No						
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.							
DATE: August 3, 2021	Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)						
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)							
A. Federal Question Cases:	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:						
<ol> <li>Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other</li> <li>FELA</li> </ol>	er Contracts  1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts  2. Airplane Personal Injury						
3. Jones Act-Personal Injury	3. Assault, Defamation						
4. Antitrust 5. Patent	<ul> <li>4. Marine Personal Injury</li> <li>5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury</li> </ul>						
6. Labor-Management Relations	6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify):						
7. Civil Rights	7. Products Liability						
8. Habeas Corpus 9. Securities Act(s) Cases	8. Products Liability – Asbestos 9. All other Diversity Cases						
	(Please specify):						
11. All other Federal Question Cases     (Please specify):							
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)							
I, Robert T Vance Jr , counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify:							
Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs:							
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.							
DATE: August 3, 2021	Attorney at Jan / Pro Sallainite 37692						
Attorney-at-Law / Pro Septiaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)  NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.							

#### United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Ricole Morgan, individually and as legal guardian of T.M., a minor,

:

Plaintiff,

•

vs : Civil Action No.

Jury Trial Demanded

Valley Forge Military Academy & College, :

:

Defendant.

#### Complaint

Plaintiff, Ricole Morgan, individually and as legal guardian of T.M., a minor, brings a series of claims against Defendant, of which the following is a statement:

1. This is a civil rights action in which the Plaintiff contends that defendant violated the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the U.S. Constitution and state common law in connection with disciplinary action it took against T.M.

#### Jurisdiction and Venue

- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims asserted herein pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, this action being brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Pub. L. 102-166, 105 Stat. 1071 (Nov. 21, 1991). This Court may exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Plaintiff's state law claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1367.
  - 3. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b).

#### **Parties**

4. Plaintiff, Ricole Morgan, is a resident of this judicial district and the legal guardian of T.M. T.M. is African-American.

- 5. Defendant, Valley Forge Military Academy & College, is a private college preparatory boarding school and military junior college located at 1001 Eagle Road, Wayne PA 19087. At all times relevant to this case, defendant received federal financial assistance.
- 6. The acts alleged in this Complaint were authorized, ratified and done by employees, agents and servants of defendant acting within the scope of their employments and agencies, and acting under color of state law.

#### **Background Facts**

- 7. Owing to its military history, students enrolled at defendant are known as "Cadets."
- 8. According to defendant's Student Handbook 2019-2020, defendant purports to build "leaders of character." Surely, however, character does not include subjecting Cadets to racially discriminatory treatment or teaching Cadets to accept race discrimination or harassment. In fact, defendant's Student Handbook 2019-2020 provides,

#### A. Discrimination and Bias-Related Behaviors

Valley Forge Military College strictly prohibits any form of discrimination and bias-related behaviors. VFMC is dedicated to educating students of diverse racial and ethnic origins and to fostering broad appreciation for cultural and ancestral diversity. Discrimination against any person on the basis of race, disability, age, gender, color, ethnicity, ancestry, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin is against the law and violates the VFMC Community Standards.

- 9. Despite its alleged adherence to these lofty and worthwhile ideals, defendant fell woefully short in fostering and promoting them with respect to Black Cadets in general, and with respect to T.M. in particular, and perpetuated dangerous racial stereotypes and tropes. Among other actions,
- a. Non-Black administrators and leadership at defendant frequently referred to Black Cadets, including T.M., as a "gang" because they socialized together;
- b. Leadership and administrators at defendant spoke openly about trying to find a way to get rid of the group of Black Cadets they labeled a gang;

- c. Without justification, leadership and administrators at defendant routinely referred to the group of Black Cadets they labeled a gang as troublemakers;
- d. Altercations among Cadets occurred frequently at defendant. When the altercations involved non-Black Cadets, leadership and administrators did not involve the local police. However, whenever the altercations involved Black Cadets, leadership and administrators routinely reported the incident to and sought the involvement of local law enforcement; and
- e. Black Cadets routinely were disciplined more severely than non-Black Cadets for committing the same offenses.
- 10. T.M. enrolled at defendant on August 15, 2019. He was an honor student, served in student leadership capacities at defendant, had received prestigious awards at defendant, and had an otherwise unblemished record.
- 11. On October 30, 2020, an altercation occurred among some Cadets. Some Cadets had a physical altercation with a non-Black Cadet who had made a racist and derogatory post on social media. The non-Black Cadet previously had engaged in racist and discriminatory behavior, and although defendant was aware of his actions, defendant never took any action against him. T.M. was not involved in the altercation.
- 12. Consistent with its pattern and practice of discrimination against Black Cadets, and without notifying Ms. Morgan, defendant immediately solicited the involvement of local law enforcement, agents of which began to conduct interviews of Cadets outside of the presence of their parents.
- 13. Despite the fact that T.M. was not involved in the physical altercation, defendant notified Ms. Morgan by email on the morning of October 31, 2020, that he was, and that an investigation was underway. See Ex. A attached hereto and made a part hereof.

- 14. Despite the fact that T.M. was not involved in the physical altercation, during the evening of October 31, 2020, defendant notified Ms. Morgan by email that T.M. was suspended until November 8, 2020, and that she should retrieve him from the campus. See Ex. B attached hereto and made a part hereof.
- 15. By letter dated November 6, 2020, defendant dismissed T.M. allegedly for conduct unbecoming a Cadet and conspiracy. See Ex. C attached hereto and made a part hereof.
- 16. By letter dated November 13, 2020, Ms. Morgan appealed T.M.'s dismissal. See Ex. D attached hereto and made a part hereof.
- 17. By letter dated November 20, 2020, defendant notified Ms. Morgan the T.M.'s dismissal had been overturned and that he would be allowed to return to defendant under a Suspended Dismissal status, along with incurring certain non-negotiable penalties, including the loss of a Stein Scholarship, 4 months of restrictions, and a \$500 fine. See Ex. E attached hereto and made a part hereof.
- 18. The conditions defendant sought to impose on T.M. were oppressive, unfair, unjustified, and discriminatory and consistent with its history and pattern and practice of disciplining Black Cadets more severely than non-Black Cadets for comparable offenses. For example,
- a. a non-Black Cadet threatened to "blow up the school" based on discipline he received with which he did not agree. Local law enforcement, including several SWAT teams were called to the campus to search for explosives, given the nature of the threat. In response, defendant merely suspended the student, but allowed him to remain on campus; and
- b. a non-Black Cadet spit in the face of a faculty member during a class. Defendant allowed the student to remain on campus.

- 19. Although defendant offered to reinstate T.M. with conditions, it did not allow him to attend classes virtually, which negatively affected his academic progress. In contrast, a non-Black Cadet involved in the incident was allowed to attend classes virtually.
- 20. Because of the discriminatory treatment defendant accorded to T.M., including the oppressive, unfair, unjustified, and discriminatory conditions imposed on his return, Ms. Morgan determined that T.M. would not return to defendant.
- 21. Despite repeated requests from Ms. Morgan, consistent with its history and pattern and practice of discrimination against Black Cadets, to date defendant has refused to provide Ms. Morgan an official transcript for T.M. At the same time, however, defendant has demanded that Ms. Morgan pay \$9,720.67 in tuition for time that T.M. was not enrolled at defendant.
- 22. As a direct and proximate result of defendant's conduct described above, Plaintiff and T.M. suffered humiliation, embarrassment, mental anguish, pain and suffering, and other damages associated with the violation of their civil rights.
- 23. Defendant acted and failed to act willfully, maliciously, intentionally, and with reckless disregard for the rights of Plaintiff and T.M.

#### Count I

#### Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment

- 24. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference as if set forth in full the averments of paragraphs 1-23, inclusive, of this Complaint.
- 25. The actions and omissions of the defendant described above violated Plaintiff and T.M.'s right guaranteed by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution to be free from discrimination on the basis of race by intentionally treating him differently than non-Black Cadets.

#### Count II

#### Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment

- 26. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference as if set forth in full the averments of paragraphs 1-25, inclusive, of this Complaint.
- 27. The actions and omissions of the defendant described above were intentionally injurious to Plaintiff and T.M. and deliberately indifferent to the impact they would have on Plaintiff and T.M.
- 28. The totality of the circumstances and the defendant's actions and omissions described above shock the conscience.
- 29. Defendant's actions and omissions violated the substantive protections to which the Plaintiff and T.M. were entitled under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

#### Count III

#### **Breach of Contract**

- 30. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference as if set forth in full the averments of paragraphs 1-29, inclusive, of this Complaint.
  - 31. The Student Handbook 2019-2020 created a contractual relationship with Plaintiff.
- 32. The actions and omissions of defendant described above breached material provisions of the contract regarding ensuring that T.M. would not be subjected to race discrimination and breached the covenant of good faith and fair dealing implied under the contract.
- 33. As a direct and proximate result of defendant's material breach of contract, Plaintiff and T.M. incurred significant economic and non-economic damages.

#### Jury Demand

34. Plaintiff demands a trial by jury as to all issues so triable.

#### Prayer for Relief

Wherefore, Plaintiff hereby demands judgment in her favor and against defendant, awarding her all damages available at law, compensatory and punitive damages, attorney's fees, expert witness fees, costs and disbursements pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1988, and such other and further relief as the Court deems appropriate.

Robert T Vance Jr

Law Offices of Robert T Vance Jr 100 South Broad Street, Strite 905

Philadelphia PA 19110

215 557 9550 tel / 215 278 7992 fax

rvance@vancelf.com

Attorney for Ricole Morgan

## Exhibit A

Date: October 31, 2020 at 12.18.35 PM ED1 To: "Anderson, Charles D." < CDAnderson are CDANDERSON

Mr Anderson, As a follow up to my voicemail, could you please contact me as soon as possible at 484-994-7313. Thank you in advance.

Regards, Ricole Morgan

On Oct 31, 2020, at 9:26 AM, Anderson, Charles D. <CDAnderson@vfmac.edu> wrote:

#### Good Morning

This email is to inform you Tyme and several other boys lured another Cadet into a room, and punched kicked and choked him, apparently because a post made on snapchat. We are currently conducting the investigation and as we peel this back we will keep you posted.

#### <image001.png>

#### C D Anderson

Sergeant Major

United States Marine Corps Ret.

Lead TAC Officer Younghusband Hall

Valley Forge Military Academy & College

Office: 610-989-1270/1271 Mobile/Fax: 484-803-2215

1001 Eagle Road, Wayne, PA 19087

vfmac.edu

## Exhibit B

Date: October 31, 2020 at 5:53:19 PM\_EDT
To: "ricoletmorgan@amail.com" < ricoletmorgan@amail.com" < ricoletmorgan@amail.com" < ricoletmorgan@amail.com 

Page 13 of 19 Subject: Assault follow up

Good Evening Mrs. Morgan,

This email is to inform you that your son has been suspended until Nov 8. You may pick your son up tonight, however, no later than tomorrow at noon.

Respectfully,



#### Vince DeMarro

Director of Music

Valley Forge Military Academy & College

Office: 610-989-1252 Mobile 610-357-7400

## Exhibit C

November 6, 2020

Ms. Ricole Morgan 335 E. Hector Street Conshohocken, PA 19428

Dear Ms. Morgan,

This letter will serve to confirm that in accordance with our Rules and Regulations, Tyme has been Dismissed from Valley Forge Military Academy & College and the Corps of Cadets effective todays date, per Special Orders No. 7 for Conduct Unbecoming a Cadet and Conspiracy.

If you wish to appeal this decision, please submit your request in writing to the President's Office, in care of the Commandant's Department. The burden is on the appealing cadet to demonstrate why the finding of dismissal should be altered. Appeals may be based only on the following grounds:

- a. Denial of due process,
- b. Significant and relevant new evidence that was not available at the time of the disciplinary action, and/or
- c. Sanctions which are unduly harsh or arbitrary.

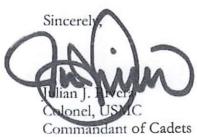
Appeal requests will be processed as follows:

- a. Deliver the appeal to the Commandant's Department for forwarding to the President's Office.
- b. The President's Office will review the appeal and the entire record of the case.
- c. Based upon a complete review of the merits of the case and the appeal, the President's Office may do any of the following:
  - (1) Determine the dismissal is warranted and affirm the results.
  - (2) Alter or suspend the original decision of dismissal.
  - (3) Refer the case to a new hearing authority for a rehearing.
  - (4) Dismiss the case.

The President's Office is the final authority for any disciplinary action taken within the Corps of Cadets, and will provide a written response to the appeal.

If you intend to appeal this decision, please provide your written appeal within seven days of the date of this notification. In the interest of time, you may fax your appeal to 610-989-1260 or send it electronically to <a href="Maintenancedecommons.org">KScitz@vfmac.edu</a>. Please send the original copy via mail.

If you have any questions regarding the coordination of final administrative actions, please contact SgtMaj Anderson, USMC (Ret.), Lead Academy TAC Officer, at 610-989-1270.



cc: TAC Officer

## Exhibit D

November 13, 2020

Ricole Morgan 335 E. Hector St. Conshohocken, Pa. 19428 484-994-7313 Ricoletmorgan@gmail.com

Valley Forge Military Academy & College Julian J. Rivera, Commandant of Cadets 1001 Eagle Rd. Wayne, Pa. 19087-3695 610-989-1200

Dear Valley Forge Military Academy & College:

I, Ricole Morgan, am writing in response to the correspondence received on November 11, 2020. This letter serves as the formal appeal to Tyme Morgan's ("Cadet Morgan") expulsion decision per Special Orders No. 7 (Conduct Unbecoming an Cadet and Conspiracy).

The requested appeal is based on the following:

- Denial of due process inclusive of the Radnor Police interview that was unbeknownst to Ricole Morgan, Legal Court Appointed Guardian;
- Evidentiary Information; and
- Unduly Harsh Sanctions, amongst other things

Tyme Morgan started Valley Forge Military Academy & College ("the Academy") on August 15, 2019. Since this time, Cadet Morgan has demonstrated stellar character and academic performance. Cadet Morgan has been an upstanding young individual, which has been demonstrated in a multitude of ways. Cadet Morgan was afforded with selective opportunities to represent the Academy and has received prestigious awards, further demonstrating the Academy's perspective on Cadet Morgan and his character.

Cadet Morgan's expulsion decision was based on Special Order No.7. Cadet Morgan has never been involved in unbecoming activities and prides himself in representing the character that our family has instilled in him. As previously mentioned, Cadet Morgan did not conspire nor participate in the events that took place on October 30, 2020. In closing, the due process and ultimate decision to expel Cadet Morgan has been extremely taxing and disappointing, on many levels. At this time, I am respectfully requesting that we are granted with the opportunity to adequately address this matter to the Board and or/President; with the ultimate goal of being reinstated.

Respectfully,

Ricole Morgan

## Exhibit E

#### Case 2:21-cv-03460-NIQA Document 1 Filed 08/03/21 Page 19 of 19

# OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

#### VALLEY FORGE MILITARY ACADEMY AND COLLEGE

1001 EAGLE ROAD, WAYNE, PA 19087-3695 / 610-989-1200 / FAX: 610-975-9642

November 20, 2020

Ms. Ricole Morgan 335 E. Hector Street Conshohocken, PA 19428

Dear Ms. Morgan,

I have read your letter appealing Tyme's dismissal. I have reviewed his disciplinary and tactical records, and have also met with the Dean of the Academy and the Commandant of Cadets to evaluate his potential success at Valley Forge.

This is Tyme's first 'Class A' offense.

The dismissal of Cadet Tyme Morgan will be overturned. However, Tyme will return to Valley Forge Military Academy as a virtual learner & Cadet until the Corps of Cadets returns from winter break on or about January 4, 2021.

Valley Forge Military Academy will pro-rate the charge for the Board for the rest of this semester from the time Tyme was dismissed.

Tyme will be awarded the following penalty for his involvement in the assault and failure to act:

- Return under a Suspended Dismissal status.
- · Loss of Stein Scholarship.
- 20 demerits
- 4 months of restriction
- 60 Penalty Tours
- \$500.00 fine
- Must write a letter of apology to the victim
- Must agree to meet with the victim upon return, in person, for a mediated discussion about what took place.

If you accept the above noted terms please inform myself and I will have the Academy staff reach out to set up Tyme for virtual learning.

Tyme has the ability to continue with his Valley Forge education albeit remotely for the next couple of weeks. You wrote a very compelling appeal and I do want to grant him a second chance. I would like to see Tyme continue as a Cadet here at Valley Forge Military Academy and look forward to seeing him in January 2021 where he can begin fresh.

Sincerely,

Stuart B. Helgeson

Colonel, USMC (ret)

Jak B. The

President